



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 11, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

SB 1138 "An Act Concerning Strengthening the School Bullying Laws" would mandate a number of new requirements on local and regional boards of education with the goal of reducing bullying in schools.

Certainly no one could argue that the genesis behind this bill is a worthy one. However, the reality is that it would impose yet another unfunded mandate on local governments - further exacerbating the tough financial situation on the local level.

K-12 public education costs already approach 70% of most municipal budgets in our state.

In Connecticut, the State's share of public elementary and secondary education costs is too low - a dismal 37.8%. According to the U.S. Census, Connecticut's towns and cities contribute a larger portion of funds for public education than do municipalities in all but one other state - and that portion is growing. The **cost for public education** across the state for the current school year exceeds **\$10.4 billion**. Municipal property taxpayers already:

- Finance 54.4 percent of that amount (at least \$5.7 billion). The State contributes an estimated 37.8 percent and the federal government 7.4 percent. The rest comes from private sources.
- Pay about \$0.64 of every \$1.00 raised in property taxes toward K-12 public education.
- Pay for at least 60 percent of Connecticut's over \$1.5 billion in special-education costs.
- Pick-up the bill for numerous other state-mandated education priorities that are not fully funded by the State.

If the State feels strongly about this, or any other new mandate, it should demonstrate its commitment by funding the proposal.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 710-9525.